

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 L-03 OMB-01 NSCE-00 EB-07

DODE-00 ERDA-05 ACDA-05 /073 W

----- 077349

R 271744Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1430

INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

CINCPAC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 07941

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, SN, NZ, UK

SUBJECT: USN ACCESS TO SINGAPORE NAVAL FACILITIES

REF: (A) LONDON 6286 (B) LONDON 3736

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PAPER GIVEN TO US BY DE COURCY-
IRELAND OF FCO AS FURTHER INTERIM RESPONSE TO OUR
REQUEST FOR HMG SUPPORT OF U.S. PROPOSAL THAT NEW
ZEALAND MANAGE SINGAPORE NAVAL FACILITIES:

QUOTE - SINGAPORE NAVAL FACILITIES

OBJECTIVES

1. OUR OBJECTIVES ARE:

(A) TO SECURE PRIORITY ACCESS TO NOS 6 AND 7 BERTHS AT
SEMBAWANG NAVAL BASIN FOR SHIPS OF THE ROYAL NAVY
(INCLUDING IN THE CASE OF NO 7 BERTH NUCLEAR-
POWERED WARSHIPS) AND THOSE OF THE AUSTRALIAN, NEW
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ZEALAND AND UNITED STATES NAVIES.

(B) TO SECURE ACCESS TO A DEPENDABLE SUPPLY OF FUEL IN SINGAPORE FOR SHIPS OF THOSE NAVIES.

PRESENT SITUATION

2. WE INTEND TO GIVE UP OUR OCCUPATION OF THE BERTHING AND FUELLING FACILITIES THAT REMAIN UNDER OUR CONTROL WHEN WE WITHDRAW OUR FORCES, AND HAVE SO NOTIFIED THE SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE 1971 AGREEMENT, DISPOSAL THEREFORE RESTS WITH THE SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT. THEY HAVE EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS TO MEET OUR FUTURE REQUIREMENTS BY GRANTING PRIORITY OF ACCESS TO THE 2 BERTHS FOR SHIPS OF THE ROYAL NAVY AND OF OUR ALLIES, PROVIDED REASONABLE NOTICE IS GIVEN; BY LEASING US A NUMBER OF TANKS AT THE FUEL DEPOT AT SENOKO IN WHICH TO MAINTAIN A SUITABLE STOCK OF FUEL UNDER UK OWNERSHIP (BUT SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT), FOR THE USE OF THOSE SHIPS; AND BY PERMITTING NPW TO USE THE FACILITIES AT SEMBAWANG. THE SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT HAVE SAID THAT THEY WILL SHORTLY INDICATE THE SINGAPOREAN AGENCY TO WHICH CONTROL OF THE FACILITIES WILL BE TRANSFERRED; WHEN THE AGENCY HAS BEEN NOMINATED, WE WILL HAVE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS AT WHICH DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE WORKED OUT.

3. WE RECOGNISE THAT NEW ZEALAND MANAGEMENT OF THE FUEL DEPOT MIGHT PROVIDE SOME SAFEGUARD IN THE EVENT OF A FUEL EMBARGO. BUT WE BELIEVE THAT CONTINUED RN OWNERSHIP OF THE FUEL, EVEN IF THE DEPOT IS MANAGED BY THE SINGAPOREANS, WILL ALSO ENABLE THE SINGAPOREANS TO RESIST ANY PRESSURE THAT MIGHT ARISE TO PLACE THE SUPPLY OF FUEL UNDER EMBARGO. WE ALSO RECOGNISE THAT IF THE BERTHS ARE MANAGED BY THE NEW ZEALANDERS, COMMERCIAL PRESSURES ARE LESS LIKELY TO CUT ACROSS THE PRINCIPLE OF PRIORITY OF ACCESS FOR WARSHIPS.

4. HOWEVER, THERE ARE THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) THE FUTURE OF THE NEW ZEALAND FORCES IN SINGAPORE
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IS FORMALLY UNDER REVIEW. THEY SEEM LIKELY TO LEAVE IN ABOUT 2 YEARS. NEW ZEALAND CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE HESITANT ABOUT TAKING ON MANAGEMENT OF THE FACILITIES IN THE INTERIM.

(B) IN ANY CASE, WHEN NEW ZEALAND FORCES LEFT, WE WOULD NEED TO NEGOTIATE TERMS FOR CONTINUING ACCESS TO THE FACILITIES, WITH NO CERTAINTY THAT THE SINGAPOR-

EANS WOULD BE AS READY THEN TO MEET OUR ESSENTIAL
REQUIREMENTS AS THEY ARE AT PRESENT.

(C) THERE IS A FIRM RN AND (WE BELIEVE) USN REQUIREMENT

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----- 077358

R 271744Z MAY 75

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FOR ACCESS TO NO 7 BERTH BY NPW. THE NEW
ZEALANDERS ARE LIKELY TO HAVE DIFFICULTY IN AGREE-
ING TO MANAGE THE ASSOCIATED SHORT EQUIPMENT WHILE
THEY MAINTAIN THEIR PRESENT POSITION ON NPW VISITS
TO NEW ZEALAND.

(D) EVEN BEFORE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REVIEW, THE NEW
ZEALANDERS HAVE EXPRESSED RELUCTANCE TO MANAGE THE
FUEL DEPOT. IT IS LIKELY THAT THEY WOULD IN ANY
CASE HAVE DIFFICULTY IN PROVIDING THE SPECIALISED
STAFF. THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE DOUBLY RELUCTANT
TO UNDERTAKE THIS RESPONSIBILITY IF AS A CONSEQUENCE
THEY NEED TO EMPLOY NON-NEW ZEALAND SPECIALISTS.

(E) THE SINGAPOREANS HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WISH TO
RUN THE FACILITIES THEMSELVES.

UNITED KINGDOM POSITION

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5. THE PRELIMINARY UNDERSTANDING WE HAVE REACHED WITH
THE SINGAPOREANS SEEMS LIKELY TO MEET OUR ESSENTIAL RE-
QUIREMENTS. WE CAN HAVE NO CONFIDENCE THAT WE COULD GET
AS SATISFACTORY AN ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE SINGAPOREANS IF,
AFTER A PERIOD OF NEW ZEALAND MANAGEMENT, WE HAD TO
NEGOTIATE FOR THE SUBSEQUENT PERIOD. NOR IS IT YET
CLEAR THAT UNDER NEW ZEALAND MANAGEMENT WE COULD SECURE
ACCESS TO THE FACILITIES FOR NPW. THIS IS OF PARTICULAR
IMPORTANCE TO THE RN. THEREFORE IN ANY APPROACH TO NEW
ZEALAND WE WOULD NEED TO STRESS THAT OUR SUPPORT FOR THE
US PROPOSAL THAT NEW ZEALAND MANAGE THE BERTHS WAS ON
THE CLEAR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE LATTER WOULD BE AVAIL-
ABLE TO NPW. WOULD AN APPROACH IN THESE TERMS CAUSE
DIFFICULTIES FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT? UNQUOTE.

2. COMMENT. UK CONTINUES TO HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT
NEW ZEALAND MANAGEMENT OF FACILITIES. WE DOUBT THAT WE
WILL OBTAIN UK SUPPORT FOR THE IDEA AND CONTINUE TO SUS-
PECT THAT THE BRITISH WOULD MUCH RATHER MAINTAIN DIRECT
UK ACCESS TO THE FACILITIES THROUGH THE MODALITY OF A
LEASE OF THE FUEL TANKS. THEY ARE WILLING TO TAKE THEIR
CHANCES WITH THE GOS ON CONTINUED ACCESS TO THE BERTHS.
SPIERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUELING, MILITARY POLICIES, NUCLEAR POWERED SHIPS, ACCESS TO PORTS, MILITARY BASES, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, FORCE & TROOP LEVELS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON07941
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750185-0189
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750517/aaaaapep.tel
Line Count: 204
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 LONDON 6286, 75 LONDON 3736
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUN 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <05 NOV 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: USN ACCESS TO SINGAPORE NAVAL FACILITIES
TAGS: MARR, MPOL, SN, NZ, UK, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006